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## Commentaries

# Education: Right, Responsibility, Bridge to the Future Linking Three Cities

Donna W. Jorgensen, Ed.D.\*

### I. Introduction

Like many Americans of the baby boomer, Cold War<sup>1</sup> generation, I

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1. Under the rule of Josef Stalin following WWII, efforts were made to intervene in the domestic affairs of the countries bordering the Soviet Union. The United States was suspicious of these activities, and while no actual war ensued, the term Cold War evolved to describe the tone of the relations between the U.S. and the Eastern Bloc nations.

was raised with a healthy dose of disdain for anything communist, socialist or Soviet. That metaphorical "Iron Curtain"<sup>2</sup> was absolutely real and foreboding to me. I saw the letters CCCP<sup>3</sup> on the uniforms of Soviet Olympians or saw them on the news without any conception of what the letters meant or even how to say them properly. At the time, most Americans simply did not have any interest in knowing the Russian translation. We simply read them as we would in English: "C" "C" "C" "P". Announcers talked about the Soviet Union<sup>4</sup> in connection with the letters, but we never made any conscious connection to the fact that the letters were not actually Roman alphabet letters. We certainly never understood at a root level that there was a difference between the Soviet Union and Russia.<sup>5</sup> The red and gold flag with its ominous hammer and sickle caused fear, and many Americans stereotyped all who lived under that banner as the enemy. Our education was definitely biased and it was, I would later learn, equally biased in the republics of the Soviet Union.

In June of 1967, I had just finished my sophomore year at West Chester State College, a southeastern Pennsylvania teacher education

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2. Iron Curtain is a term coined by Winston Churchill in 1946. The now famous term was used in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri on March 5, 1946. Churchill had not been reelected as British Prime Minister and he traveled to the U.S. to meet with President Harry S. Truman. It described the Eastern bloc nations of Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and the U.S.S.R. In the speech, Churchill condemned Russia's occupation of these nations. *Available at* <http://www.artes.com/truman/iron.htm> (last visited February 21, 2004).

3. In the Cyrillic alphabet, these letters equate to our SSSR. They stand for Союз Советских Социалистических Республик or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It was frequently shortened to Soviet Union or Советский Союз.

4. The Soviet Union was actually a union of sovereign states that did not change from the end of World War II until the breakup in 1991. There were 15 republics: Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, Moldovian Soviet Socialist Republic, Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic, Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic, Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic. Article 71 of 1977 Constitution, *available at* <http://wiretap.area.com/Gopher/Gov/World/ussr77.com> (last visited February 21, 2004).

Although the republics had the right to secede, they did not manifest any desire to do so. In 1989 several of the Baltic republics began to exercise greater autonomy. Article 72 of 1977 Constitution, *available at* <http://wiretap.area.com/Gopher/Gov/World/ussr77.com> (last visited February 21, 2004).

5. The Soviet Union was the term Americans and most of the world used for the group of republics/states that comprised the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Russian Republic was the largest of the republics. Because the capital of the U.S.S.R., Moscow, was in the Russian Republic, it is easy to understand why Americans were satisfied to use the terms interchangeably.

institution, where I was preparing to become a teacher of English. I had no idea at the time that the summit<sup>6</sup> occurring across the river from us, in little known Glassboro, New Jersey,<sup>7</sup> would eventually become a way of connecting me with teaching colleagues in an eastern Ukrainian city. I only knew then that I had a passion for teaching. That passion for teaching would lead me to pursue journeys I had not yet imagined.

I firmly believe that education is the path to understanding, friendship, and peace, so perhaps it was portentous that, at the same time I was pursuing my teaching degree and certification, the conference took place on the campus of a teacher education institution. For the organizers, it was nothing more than the one mutually agreeable site where the summit could be conducted.<sup>8</sup> Other than vague memories of Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin<sup>9</sup> and President Lyndon Johnson shown on news broadcasts, I have no recollection of any personal connection with the summit at that time. It was simply another political event among those of the Cold War era. Memories of the whole affair receded into my long-term memory to lie dormant for over thirty years. The politics of the Cold War were more centered on the arms race and potential war than on education and the role it could play in building a better world. Outside of organizations like the United Nations (U.N.)<sup>10</sup>

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6. Chairman Kosygin of U.S.S.R. was to visit the United Nations and a proposal was made that he should meet with President Johnson for a summit to discuss concerns about arms proliferation. There was some difficulty in determining where it would be held and finally Glassboro, New Jersey was chosen. The meetings would come to be known as The Glassboro Summit or The Hollybush Summit, so named because this was the name of the university president's residence at Glassboro State College, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968 Volume XIV, Soviet Union: The Glassboro Summit*, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xiv1398.htm> (last visited June 3, 2004).

7. Glassboro, New Jersey is located approximately halfway between Washington, D.C. and New York City. A short distance across the river from Philadelphia, it was originally a glass-manufacturing town and is the home of Rowan University, which was formerly Glassboro State College (hereinafter "Glassboro").

8. Because Kosygin's stated purpose for being in the U.S. was to visit the United Nations, he did not want it to appear that any meeting with President Johnson was an official diplomatic visit. Therefore he refused to meet either in Washington or at Camp David. As a compromise, the meetings between Kosygin and Johnson were held on the campus of then Glassboro State College (now Rowan University). *Supra* note 6.

9. Kosygin is variously referred to as Premier Kosygin, Prime Minister Kosygin and Chairman Kosygin. He became First Deputy Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers in 1959 and he became Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR in 1964. That effectively made him head of the Soviet government, sharing power with Leonid Brezhnev and Nikolay Podgorny. He was appointed by decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on October 15, 1964 and discharged by decree passed at the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the 10<sup>th</sup> Supreme Soviet, October 23, 1980. (Советский Исторический Энциклопедия), Vol 7, Moscow, 1965; *Isvestia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 7, 103), available at <http://lego70.tripod.com/ussr/kosygin.htm?embedded=yes> (last visited June 3, 2004).

10. The United Nations was chartered in 1945 with a membership of 51 states.

and its agency, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)<sup>11</sup> not too many people cared about the role of education in our enemies' countries.

We are often constructing metaphorical bridges without our conscious knowledge. The foundation stones and the struts are put in place at different times and in different locations. Only after many years are they recognized for what they are. In my case, it took years for the bridge to be complete. When I began teaching, I had no idea that my career journey would lead me to Boyertown,<sup>12</sup> Pennsylvania, to Bohodukhiv,<sup>13</sup> Ukraine and ultimately to Glassboro,<sup>14</sup> New Jersey. It was 1975 when I found myself returning to my teaching career after the births of my two children. At that time I accepted a position teaching English at Boyertown Area Senior High. When, sixteen years later, a call went out to the teachers of Boyertown to participate in the return half of a teacher exchange, I had no logical reason for applying. It seemed like the kind of educational challenge I could embrace with enthusiasm. I loved teaching, I loved languages, and I loved my prior experiences with foreign students. I would not have described myself as particularly adventurous or intrepid. I have no ancestral connection to Ukraine. Even though I had no idea what awaited me in Bohodukhiv during the three-month exchange, I have always had the firm conviction that education is the key to the future. So began my tale of two, well, actually three cities: Boyertown, Pennsylvania; Bohodukhiv, Ukraine; and Glassboro, New Jersey.

Of the more than four hundred teachers and administrators in the Boyertown Area School District,<sup>15</sup> a small number applied to go to this

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Membership has grown to include virtually all the independent states of the world. Among its several charges, the U.N. is charged with the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination. This includes the right to education. Ukraine became a member October 24, 1945 [hereinafter U.N.].

11. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. [hereinafter UNESCO] Its Constitution was adopted in London on November 16, 1945. Ukraine joined May 12, 1954. Its purpose as an organization is to oversee human rights initiatives.

12. Boyertown is located in southeast Pennsylvania in Berks County. The Borough of Boyertown is .8 square miles and has a population of approximately 3,940 (2000 census).

13. Bohodukhiv is located in the Kharkiv region of eastern Ukraine. Bohodukhiv is the name of both a district and a town. The district has approximately 21,400 people living in it. Less than half the land area of the district, 1630 hectares, has people living on it, available at <http://www.kharkov.net/region/towns-e.htm> (last visited February 20, 2004).

14. Glassboro, *supra* note 7.

15. Boyertown Area School District is the sending district for the Borough of Boyertown and several surrounding townships. It is over 60 square miles in area and has a population of approximately 38,000. There are seven elementary schools, grades k-6;

former Soviet, faraway, non-English speaking town. Interviews were held. From among the candidates, I was selected to be one of three teachers who would travel to Bohodukhiv to stay from August until November 1992. In Boyertown, I was a teacher of English at the senior high school, one of the other teachers was a teacher of French and German at the junior high school, and the third taught art at the junior high school. Not too long after our selection, the first half of the exchange would begin when two teachers of English from Bohodukhiv arrived in Boyertown.

The two Bohodukhiv teachers,<sup>16</sup> arrived in Boyertown in late fall of 1991 for the first half of the teacher exchange, and I found myself bonding with one in particular. Once I met her, I was convinced that my decision to apply and my selection were destined. Her birthday is in the same month as mine (she is a year older); she has a daughter the same age as mine, and she also has a twin sister. She is a gentle and kind ambassador of her town with a true love of teaching. Our time together in Boyertown confirmed my conviction that when I arrived in Bohodukhiv I would be welcomed, not only by my colleagues in the schools, but also by the citizens themselves. There is nothing easy about deciding to leave family and job for three months to travel thousands of miles to a town where few Americans have ever visited. I had little to give me confidence in my decision other than the conviction that I could and would make a difference in the educational journey of children half a world away. I had the opportunity to begin the building of a bridge that would connect our cities through education.

The world was changing as we moved into the final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ukraine was a newly independent nation,<sup>17</sup> and the people of Bohodukhiv and its educational institutions were facing many difficulties. Perestroika<sup>18</sup> and glasnost<sup>19</sup> were relatively untried concepts.

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two junior high schools, grades 7-9; one senior high school, grades 10-12. Over six thousand students attend these schools. *Available at* [http://basd.netjunction.com/Annual\\_Report/annual\\_report.htm](http://basd.netjunction.com/Annual_Report/annual_report.htm) (last visited February 21, 2004).

16. The two teachers were Vera Popova and Tamara Solozhenetz. Each was a teacher of English as a foreign language in a different school in Bohodukhiv. Both had distinguished careers. We developed an almost immediate friendship, however it was with Tamara I felt the strongest connection.

17. The Act of Declaration of the Independence of Ukraine, August 24, 1991 was approved by a national vote on December 1, 1991. [Declaration of Independence], *available at* <http://www.rada.kiev.ua/const/conengl.htm> (last visited February 20, 2004.)

18. A term coined by the former Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev, which means "rebuilding." The policy was aimed at economic rebuilding and called for extensive economic reform. The general consensus when I arrived in Bohodukhiv in 1992 was that the only people profiting from the concept of perestroika were the politicians.

19. The term roughly translates to "openness." The policy of the Gorbachev regime was supposed to be a way to publicize the corruption and inefficiency of Brezhnev's

For that matter, so was independence. The people believed that perestroika had done nothing to enhance their quality of life. In fact, when I mentioned the term, some people actually spit, and their venomous distrust of the policy was quite pointed. On both sides of the ocean, people were facing a significantly different new world order without the menace of the Cold War. Through Sister Cities International,<sup>20</sup> two towns were given the opportunity to take meaningful steps toward the future by instituting educational exchanges.

Sister Cities International is an organization designed to match cities in different parts of the world for the purpose of developing cultural understanding and to advance the cause of peace and friendship.<sup>21</sup> The friendship between Boyertown and Bohodukhiv began in 1983 when a delegation of representatives participated in a People-to-People program. That first encounter would eventually evolve into a Sister Cities partnership in 1990. The first exchange between the two cities was a municipal exchange that brought the mayor and police chief of Bohodukhiv to Boyertown where the formal signing of the agreement occurred. The next phase was the first half of the teacher exchange that would be the beginning of a series of exchanges meant to continue the building of the bridge of understanding and friendship. One of the things that the sister cities have in common is a fundamental understanding that all citizens have the right to an education. Governments, local, state, and federal, have a responsibility to provide that education.

## II. Right to Education

Many international documents and treaties have set forth the right of every human to education. A significant number of these documents are connected to the U.N. and UNESCO and become the responsibility of all signatory States to enforce. They do not supersede individual nations' own Constitutional documents regarding education. It is common to find articles included in the Constitutions of individual nations that guarantee

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policies. Newspapers were given greater in freedom in what they printed; literary works that had been suppressed were published. The parallel policies of perestroika and glasnost were supposed to increase political openness and encourage economic restructuring. In 1992, few Ukrainians used this term. It was primarily a term used by the American news media. Janusz Tomiak, *Education in the Baltic States, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia*, COMPARATIVE EDUCATION (1992).

20. President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed the People-to-People program in 1956 as a way to promote citizen democracy and lessen the chance of future world conflict. Originally part of National League of Cities, Sister Cities International became a separate, nonprofit corporation in 1967. Available at <http://www.sister-cities.org/sci/aboutsci/history> (last visited January 18, 2004).

21. *Sister Cities International Mission Statement and Goals*, available at <http://www.sister-cities.org/sci/aboutsci/mission> (last visited January 18, 2004).

the right of education to all without regard to ethnicity, age or disability. Some of these current documents, as is the case with Ukraine, have evolved from earlier documents of law. Because historically Ukraine was a part of the U.S.S.R., both the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Constitution of Ukraine were governing documents.

#### *A. Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*

The Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, adopted at the Seventh (Special) Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., Ninth Convocation, on October 7, 1977,<sup>22</sup> set forth a number of articles related to education.<sup>23</sup> As this was the political ideology, this was the focus of education. The 1977 Constitution decrees a uniform system of public education. It is designed to provide a general education and vocational training. It specifically "... serves the communist education and intellectual and physical development of the youth, and trains them for work and social activity."<sup>24</sup>

#### *B. Constitution of Ukraine*

Ukraine declared its sovereignty on July 16, 1990 and on August 24, 1991. The Act of Declaration of the Independence of Ukraine<sup>25</sup>

22. U.S.S.R. CONST. (CONSTITUTION (FUNDAMENTAL LAW) OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS, 1977), available at <http://wiretap.area.com/Gopher/Gov/World/ussr77.con> (last visited November 24, 2003) [hereinafter 1977 Constitution].

23. *Id.* at §§ 25 & 45.

Article 25 of the Constitution states: In the USSR there is a uniform system of public education, which is being constantly improved that provides general education and vocational training for citizens, serves the communist education and intellectual and physical development of the youth, and trains them for work and social activity

Article 45 says: Citizens of the USSR have the right to education.

This right is ensured by free provision of all forms of education, by the institution of universal, compulsory secondary education, and broad development of vocational, specialized secondary, and higher education, in which instruction is oriented toward practical activity and production; by the development of extramural, correspondence and evening courses, by the provision of state scholarships and grants and privileges for students; by the free issue of school textbooks; by the opportunity to attend a school where teaching is in the native language; and by the provision of facilities for self-education.

24. Stanislav Tsalyk. *Celebrating 7 years of Constitutional rights*. Kyiv Weekly, June 27, 2003, Page 7.

25. It is difficult to find the exact wording of the Act of Declaration of Independence. It is referred to frequently, including in the Preamble to the Constitution adopted in 1996 "guided by the Act of Declaration of the Independence of Ukraine of 24



separated Ukraine from the former Soviet Union. Independence was proclaimed in the Verkhovna Rada<sup>26</sup> and was subject to a referendum that was held on December 1, 1991. The purpose of the referendum was to affirm the action of the Verkhovna Rada. Many observers around the world thought that there would not be strong support for independence in Ukraine. On December 1, over 80% of the eligible voters participated and 90% voted in favor of independence.<sup>27</sup> It took five years from the declaration of independence and subsequent approval by the citizens for the writing and adoption of a constitution for the newly independent nation. The Constitution—the Fundamental Law of Ukraine,<sup>28</sup> was adopted at the fifth session of the Verkhovna Rada<sup>29</sup> on June 28, 1996.

In this Constitution, as had been true in earlier versions including the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the right to education is affirmed. It is Article 53 that sets out the major points with regard to education.<sup>30</sup>

### C. *Constitution of UNESCO*

"The right to education is a fundamental human right . . . the right to education is at the very heart of UNESCO's mission and is an integral part of UNESCO's Constitution."<sup>31</sup> The Constitution states

that the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man

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August 1991, approved by the national vote of 1 December 1991, adopts this Constitution—the Fundamental Law of Ukraine." UKR. CONST. (CONSTITUTION OF UKRAINE) PREAMBLE, *available at*: <http://www.rada.kiev.ua/gov/const/conengl.htm> (last visited June 3, 2004).

26. Верховный Рада The Supreme Council roughly equivalent to Parliament except that in Ukraine it is unicameral.

27. ROLAND RICH. Symposium: Recent Developments in the Practice of State Recognition *Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*. 4 EJIL (1993) 36-65. p.41.

28. CONSTITUTION OF UKRAINE, *supra* note 30.

29. Ukraine has a unicameral Supreme Council (Parliament) known as the Verkhovna Rada. Two hundred twenty-five of the four hundred fifty seats are proportionally allocated to parties that gain 4% or more of the electoral vote. The remaining half are elected by popular vote. All members serve four-year terms. Elections were last held March 31, 2002 and are scheduled to be held in 2006. Discussions have been held about a shift to a bicameral Parliament; however, no change has yet been approved. CIA—The World Factbook—Ukraine. *Available at* <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos.up.html> (last visited February 19, 2004).

30. 1977 Constitution, *supra* note 22. The article states the right to education and delineates additional points regarding what that education should look like, how much it should cost, and the right to be taught in the mother tongue.

31. UNESCO's Constitution—(extract), *available at* <http://portal.unesco.org/education/> (last visited February 19, 2004).

and constitute a sacred duty. . . . The States Parties to this Constitution believ[e] in full and equal opportunities for education for all. . .<sup>32</sup> by instituting collaboration among the nations to advance the ideal of equality of education opportunity.<sup>33</sup>

UNESCO monitors the world's response to ensuring that education is available to all and provides reports on the progress of nations in meeting the obligation.

#### *D. Convention against Discrimination in Education*

In 1960, UNESCO's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights created the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (Education Convention).<sup>34</sup> In the Education Convention, UNESCO reiterated its stance that every person has a right to education and made it very clear that discrimination in education violates that right. In Article 4, the Education Convention calls for State Parties to "formulate, develop, and apply a national policy . . . to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment in the matter of education."<sup>35</sup>

#### *E. Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

The U.N. General Assembly wanted to affirm a certain standard of achievement for all people and all nations, and wanted to promote certain rights and freedoms through teaching and education. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Declaration) stated that higher education should be equally available to all on the basis of merit.

Article 26 of the Declaration sets forth the continuing belief that everyone has the right to education and that it should be free at least at the elementary and fundamental levels. It states that elementary education should be compulsory and should be directed to the:

full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall . . . further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. . . . Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.<sup>36</sup>

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32. *Id.*

33. *Id.*

34. The Convention Against Discrimination in Education was adopted on December 14, 1960 and entered into force May 22, 1962 [hereinafter Education Convention].

35. UNESCO CONSTITUTION, *supra* note 31.

36. Substantive issues arising in the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights. Plans of action for primary education, (art.14)

### III. Responsibility for Education

Mandates exist in most nations with regard to education. As we have already seen, there are many documents, both national and international, that describe the rights of the populace to an education. Unfortunately these mandates are not always accompanied by appropriate funding mandates. When an emerging nation is faced with all the financial and political issues of statehood, it is not easy to ensure that the mandates for education are enforced.

#### A. *Ukrainian responsibilities*

There is a long history of Ukrainian constitutional guarantees of the right to education and the responsibility of the State to provide for education. Some of the history is wrapped up in the Constitutions of the former Soviet Union as well as in the specific articles of pre-Independence Ukraine SSR Constitutions.<sup>37</sup> The Law of Ukraine "On Education"<sup>38</sup> is a crucial instrument in documenting how Ukraine will assume its responsibilities in providing an education for all. The opening comments in the Law state that:

education is the basis of the intellectual, cultural, spiritual, social, economic development of the society and state. The goal of education is the comprehensive development of an individual as personality and the biggest value of the society, development of his/her talents, mental and physical abilities, training of high moral qualities, formation of citizens able to make a deliberate choice, improvement on this basis intellectual, artistic, cultural potential of the people, improvement of the educational level of the people, provision of the national economy with qualified specialists. Education in Ukraine shall be grounded on the basics of humanism, democracy, national consciousness, mutual respect among nations and nationalities.<sup>39</sup>

There follows a list of sixty-six articles that spell out the educational plan for Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

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10/06/99 E/C. 12/1999/4 (General comments) General Comment 11 (1999) 26 April-14 May, 1999. Available at [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/E.C.12.1999.4.EN?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/E.C.12.1999.4.EN?OpenDocument) (last visited November 25, 2003).

37. Following Czar Nicholas II's abdication, Ukraine began the process of developing its own Constitution and on April 29, 1918 it approved the Constitution of the Ukrainian National Republic. This particular Constitution stipulated that "... education . . . did not give a person any special privileges." *Kyiv Weekly*.

38. LAW OF UKRAINE "ON EDUCATION" VIDOMOSTI VERKHOVNOY RADY (VVR), 1991, NO. 34, PAGE 451) Document 1060-XII, May 23, 1991.

39. *Id.*

40. *Id.* Article 65 states that if the international agreement of Ukraine sets up other

*B. Financial constraints on fulfilling responsibility in Ukraine*

In 1993, the State and local budgets allocated 64.6 million hryvnas<sup>41</sup> for education and 5,033.7 million was allocated in 1997 to the maintenance of educational establishments. There was an upward trend in spending. In 1993, the total expenditure for maintenance of general education establishments was 47.8 million hryvnas or 74% of the total budget. The State budget contributed 13.4% while local budgets contributed 92%. Unfortunately there was a shortage of resources, which prevented the state from adequately supporting children's health and education from 1996-1997. In 1997 the State budget was contributing only 11% and the local budgets were providing 93.3%.<sup>42</sup> Although money is allocated for teacher training (in vocational/technical schools, higher education institutes and other teacher training establishments), the proportion of this spending in total education spending declined due to the country's difficult economic situation.<sup>43</sup>

By 2002 it was becoming increasingly clear that the government's constitutional commitment to education did not extend to providing sufficient financial support. Economic crises including the cost of cleanup of the environmental pollution from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and health care costs for associated problems make it difficult to put sufficient money into education. This may resolve itself in the long term or the need to divert funding from education into these areas may continue.<sup>44</sup> Many of the political parties<sup>45</sup> comprising Parliament had

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rules than those provided for by legislation of Ukraine on education, rules of the international agreement shall prevail and Article 66 states that government officials will be held accountable if there is not compliance with the terms of these international documents.

41. The hryvna is the newest Ukrainian currency. In 1992 Ukraine paid \$30 million to have hryvna printed in Canada. The hryvna is used here in connection with 1993 budgets: however, the term was not officially used until September 2, 1996. At the time of writing the article, one U.S. dollar was roughly 5 hryvnas. The currency came into use after the loss of the ruble to Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union. The first currency, the coupon, was extremely unstable and constantly fluctuating in value was the coupon. Many Bohodukhiv residents considered the coupons to be worthless paper because piles of coupons were needed to make even the smallest purchases.

42. It should be noted that the Boyertown area school district spent over \$56 million educating its children in school year 2001-2002. Even though there are fewer children and it is difficult to make direct comparisons of costs, it is clear that the expenditures in all of Ukraine are woefully inadequate when compared with the expenditures of a single district in the U.S. Available at <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord/2002/documentation/tbodies/crc-c-70-add11.htm> (last visited June 3, 2004).

43. *Id.* at Article 627.

44. <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord/2002/documentation/tbodies/crc-c-70-add11.htm> (last visited June 3, 2004).

45. A number of political parties have arisen in Ukraine. Amid the respective agendas among this plethora of parties, it has been difficult to establish even the

education issues on their agendas. In reality, funding for education was very likely to be last in priority. On the eleventh anniversary of Ukraine's independence, President Leonid Kuchma<sup>46</sup> went on television and addressed the people. In his speech he listed four problems he wanted to see addressed. The first priority was for the eradication of poverty; the second was for affordable healthcare; the third was for pension reform; and the fourth was quality education, without regard to level of income. He acknowledged that education had not been given the priority it deserved up to that point. He conceded that the financial situation of teachers and lecturers at higher education institutes "not only undermines the prestige of the profession, but also creates conditions for corruption, both in terms of admission to such institutes and passing the examinations."<sup>47</sup>

Oleg Kryskiv is a professor at the Ukrainian State Technical University of Forestry in Lviv.<sup>48</sup> He comments on the aspects of bribes in higher education and indicates that students typically can bribe a professor for a passing grade for \$20. This is directly connected to the standard of living of professors. Kryskiv earns approximately \$51.50 a month. What has the system become if the professors are paid so little that they will accept bribes as a way of supplementing income? Kuchma continued in the speech to admit that although teachers' salaries had increased by more than one and one half times in the preceding two years, this was still not enough. He committed himself to do all that he could to at least double it.

One year later, on April 15, 2003, Leonid Kuchma<sup>49</sup> gave his annual State of the Nation Report to the Verkhovna Rada. With regard to education in Ukraine at that time, Kuchma stated:

The social sphere also remained a relapse of the old system. Legislative fundamentals of the country's social policy are practically

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fundamental right of education as a common cause. No single party has sufficient seats in the Verkhovna Rada to make its platform a national agenda.

46. Kuchma, the second President of independent Ukraine, was elected in July 1994 and is serving his second five-year term. The next elections are scheduled to be held in October 2004. CIA—World Factbook. *Available at* <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook.geos/up.html> (last visited June 3, 2004).

47. "Build Ukraine" 11th Anniversary of Ukraine's Independence, TV Address of the President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma to the Ukrainian people, August 24, 2002, *available at* <http://www.artukraine.com/buildukraine/elanniv2.htm> (last visited June 3, 2004).

48. Lviv, located in western Ukraine and thus closer to Poland, has a distinctly different culture from Bohodukhiv in Eastern Ukraine which is closer to Russia.

49. Leonid Kuchma became the second President of Ukraine after Kravchuk who was extremely unpopular. Kuchma is now no more popular than his predecessor and the people are rapidly becoming disillusioned. They do not seem to believe that anyone will really do much good for the people of Ukraine.

being laid out only now. For the most part, we only talk about the pension, medical, education reforms, and in practice do little to renew the spheres which are of direct appeal for the people.<sup>50</sup>

Kuchma recognizes that the issue of education is critical. However, his actions have yet to support his rhetoric. During my June 2003 visit to Bohodukhiv, I found a sense of resignation, a belief that no President, old or new; no Parliament, old or new, would do more than talk about the things that really matter to the people. The only things that get done are the things that matter directly to the politicians. Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, was more in evidence on television than Kuchma, and most people simply seemed resigned to the reality that some things were not going to change.

In August of 2003, Kuchma again addressed the Verkhovna Rada. In his address, he outlined twelve challenges that Ukraine, now in its twelfth year as an independent nation, still faced. A brief mention in the eighth challenge addresses education. Kuchma affirmed the belief in the human being as having the highest value in the state. He included education as a piece of what is needed to show people that they have this value.<sup>51</sup> In his actual speech to the people, he broadly covered internal developments including growth in GDP<sup>52</sup> and income of the people rising, as well as the foreign policy of Ukraine. There was no direct mention of education.<sup>53</sup> The connection between GNP and funding for education has always been discussed in the Verkhovna Rada. Commitments have been made to ensure that funding for education will be 10% of the GNP.<sup>54</sup>

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50. Address by the President of Ukraine, *available at* <http://www.un.int/ukraine/Ukr=UN/policy/addressVR2003.htm> (last visited November 24, 2003).

51. The President of Ukraine: twelve challenges to independence, August 23, 2003. *Available at* <http://www.un.int/ukraine/UKR-UN/policy/12challenges.htm> (last visited November 24, 2003).

52. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is also known as GNP (Gross National Product). Gross National Product GNP is the dollar value of a country's final output of goods and services in a year divided by its population. It reflects the average income of a country's citizens. GNP per capita shows what part of a country's GNP each person would if this GNP were divided equally. The population of Ukraine in 2003 was estimated to be 48,055,439.

53. Ukraine. Twelve years of independence, August 24, 2003. *Available at* <http://www.un.int/ukraine/Ukr-UN/policy/independence.htm>. (last visited November 24, 2003).

54. The GDP showed its first growth since Independence in 2000 and was 6% in 2003. CIA—World Factbook *supra* note 46. The GDP in 2002 was estimated to be approximately equivalent to \$218 billion. Therefore, if the funding were allocated as stated, the spending for education should be \$21.8 billion. The actual expenditure is much less.

#### IV. Bridge to the Future

Ukraine's people are not sure that any true progress has been made. They feel that they are moving backwards. Shops in cities and towns now have the goods consumers need and want, and services are now available. It is difficult for citizens to enjoy this change because salaries are low and unemployment is high in many areas. Even where the goods and services are now available, there is little money to spend. With salaries not keeping pace with cost of living and pensions at ridiculously low levels, many Ukrainians simply cannot afford to be optimistic. In 2002, a retired schoolteacher had a pension equivalent to \$26 per month; a retired factory worker, \$20 per month. Utilities frequently consume half of that amount. Food costs are prohibitive and pensioners must rely on their own gardens. They can rarely afford the food sold in local grocery stores.<sup>55</sup>

Children attend school because they must, but they do not always see education as their bridge to the future. For many years there were either outdated or insufficient textbooks. There was little funding to keep schools in good shape. In spite of these issues, teachers attempt to promote optimism in their students. In Bohodukhiv the picture is a bit brighter, perhaps because of the ongoing bridge building between their city and Boyertown. There does seem to be a growing sense that education is the only road that will take young people to a more positive future. Knowing that is fine, but it does not make it possible for every student who completes compulsory education and who would like a higher education to have one.

The son of my host family has matriculated at a university in Kharkiv and the cost of tuition for a year is prohibitive for a family where the father is not working because citizens cannot afford the propane gas service he once provided, and mother earns less than \$50 a month as an elementary school teacher. The young man did not pass his entrance exams at quite a high enough score to qualify for full financial support<sup>56</sup> that is competitively awarded only on the basis of academic talent and not on financial need. He works in a carwash on his break rather than going home to his family so that he can contribute to the costs of the university.

If the bridge to the future is ever to be built with education as its foundation, everyone in the nation must commit to its importance. The

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55. Yuri Zarakhovich. *In the Shadow of Lenin: Lenin's Legacy Looms large over Ukraine's Rural Regions*. *TIME EUROPE*, March 27, 2002. Available at <http://www.time.com/time/europe/eu/magazine0,13716,220382,00.html> (last visited June 3, 2004).

56. Article 53 of Constitution actually provides for funding on a competitive basis.

world depends on its children, those who are now in school, to be the future. If the government does not support the intellectual growth of these children, the future looks bleak. I. Tarapov, a professor at Kharkiv State University feels that deintellectualization is “the most serious threat to Ukraine’s national security.”<sup>57</sup> Tarapov contends “there will never be any country in the world that can build an effective economy and create a stable state and political system without a high level of education and culture of the people, without the development of scientific research on the necessary scale.”<sup>58</sup>

Prior to the 1917 Revolution,<sup>59</sup> eighty percent of the population of Ukraine was illiterate. By the 1930s,<sup>60</sup> mass illiteracy had been eradicated at least according to government reporting methods. Currently the concept of literacy is that those over the age of fifteen can read and write and it is believed that 99.7% of the population meets this criteria.<sup>61</sup> Even though children were receiving basic primary education so that they were deemed literate, as late as 1985 only 6 percent of the population of Ukraine had a higher education. In 1986 Ukraine had 850,000 students in 146 higher educational institutions and there were 21,000 secondary schools with a total enrollment of 6.9 million.<sup>62</sup> Tarapov, by way of comparison notes that in 1989 spending on education in the U.S. was 1.3 times *greater than* spending on defense. In the USSR spending on education was only sixty-six percent *of* defense spending.<sup>63</sup> Ukraine’s Law “On Education” requires funds for education in the amount of ten percent of the budget or about four percent of the GNP. In spite of this requirement, funds are often diverted because of pressing governmental needs and do not make it to educational institutions.

Salaries paid to workers in education rank in forty-sixth place of forty-eight rankings even though the law says, “wages and salaries to

57. I. Tarapov. *The Real Threat to Ukraine's National Security*. RUSSIAN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY, August 2001, pp. 79-90. English translation by M.E. Sharpe, Inc. translated from the Russian text, 1999. Most interesting is a quote from Napoleon that Tarapov feels sums up the issues. “The death of an army is a misfortune, death of an emperor is a double misfortune, but the death of a nation’s intelligence is total catastrophe.” *Id.* at p. 79

58. *Id.*

59. This was, of course the Russian Revolution where the last Czar, Nicholas II, abdicated. Ultimately the Romanov family was taken from St. Petersburg to Ekaterinburg and executed. Because there were many parts of what would become the Soviet Union that were essentially feudal societies, many of the peasants were illiterate. After the Revolution, the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin came to power.

60. Communism was firmly entrenched. Stalin took over after the death of Lenin in 1924, and things did begin to change.

61. CIA—The World Factbook. Available at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/up.html> (last visited June 3, 2004).

62. Tarapov, *supra* note 57, at 82.

63. *Id.*



workers in higher education in Ukraine should not be lower than the level of wages and salaries in the sphere of industry."<sup>64</sup> Just as a comparison, in 1987, the average annual income of a person with a BS degree in the United States was about \$26,300 and the holder of a Ph.D. degree earned about \$39,500.<sup>65</sup> In the U.S.S.R. the annual income of the equivalent categories came to three or four thousand rubles, equivalent to about \$3,000. Naturally, in the U.S. salaries are now even higher. Startlingly, in Ukraine now, the amount has fallen to the equivalent of between \$1500 and \$2000. This is particularly troubling when it is quite clear that investing in education will change the course of a nation:

World statistics provide data showing that every ruble invested in raising the population's level of knowledge yields three to five rubles in additional national income. American economists have estimated that almost 50 percent of the growth of national income in the United States has come from raising the work forces' level of education.<sup>66</sup>

In 1993 the pension for a professor was about thirty to fifty percent of what a technical secretary in state service would receive. It is neither prestigious nor profitable to work in science or education. It is easier to make money by being an office holder in the government. Tarapov makes several suggestions for the improvement of Ukraine. He suggests that the state budget "has to be turned upside down: attention to the human sphere of production, science, and education has to be given top priority."<sup>67</sup> It is crucial to put education in the forefront instead of allowing it to receive only leftovers from the budget. Today in Ukraine, people must be more concerned about the practical aspects of day-to-day existence. They must worry about where they will get food, clothing, and services and how they will afford them. Ukrainians are not worried about financing programs of education and science because they are worried about living from one day to the next. In Ukraine, politicians have continually made promises before elections and ignored those promises after being elected. No Ukrainian official seems to believe that reform in education and science is critically important.<sup>68</sup> There is a general sense that it is up to Ukraine and Ukrainians to solve the problems and not to depend on others to help them. In some ways this is a positive attitude, but in others it is quite depressing because of the lack of resources.

Another issue of concern in education is that there are conflicts over

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64. *Id.*

65. *Id.*

66. *Id.* at 85.

67. *Id.* at 87.

68. *Id.* at 89.

language. If the next generation of leaders is to build the bridge, they will need to find a solution to this problem. It appears that Ukrainian, designated as the only national language, is mandated as the language of education, yet in many institutions, Russian is still the language of teaching rather than Ukrainian. I well remember going to Bohodukhiv in 1992 with my few words of Russian and quickly learning a great deal more because I heard it spoken at home as well as in school. The only classes in the schools of Bohodukhiv where Ukrainian was the language of choice were Ukrainian language classes and Ukrainian literature classes. Everywhere else in school, Russian was the language of teaching. In the community, people spoke both languages, but the spoken language most frequently heard was a strange mixture of both languages the locals often referred to as "Bohodukhovski." By the time I returned several years later, it had been mandated that all teaching would be done in Ukrainian and any teacher who could not show competence teaching in Ukrainian would be dismissed. Imagine the pressure on teachers. Because Bohodukhiv has an army base on the edge of town and is in eastern Ukraine, many of the teachers were not native speakers of Ukrainian and had spent their lives speaking and teaching in Russian. I learned Russian, and it was not considered at all unusual in 1992. Now textbooks and children's books languages of national minorities are published yearly under government programs, but economic conditions prevent numbers from being what they should be. Forty to sixty percent of publications for children are in Ukrainian.<sup>69</sup>

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed in 1999 and is celebrated every year on February 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>70</sup> Today, UNESCO is supporting what is known as the mother-tongue initiative to ensure that education for children will be conducted in the native language.<sup>71</sup> There is evidence that this is important because of the identity connection children feel when their education is conducted in the language of their nation. Sergei Kiselyov says that in Ukraine there were promises that when Ukrainian was designated as the only national language, people

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69. Committee on the Rights of the Child. *supra* note 43 at 273, 276.

70. *The mother-tongue dilemma*. EDUCATION TODAY JULY-SEPTEMBER 2003. UNESCO's position on the mother language and multilingual education is:

1. Promoting education in the mother tongue to improve the quality of education.
2. Encouraging bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of schooling as a means of furthering social and gender equality and as a key part of linguistically diverse societies.
3. Pushing languages as a central part of inter-cultural education.

71. John Daniel. *Editorial* EDUCATION TODAY JULY-SEPTEMBER 2003. There is a connection between language and identity. Children who start school in their native language make a better start, perform better over time. p. 1.

would see improvements in their cultural lives. He believes that the people who believed that this would happen were naïve. What has ensued from the designation of the single national language for newspapers, books, and use in schools is conflict between the Ukrainian speakers in western Ukraine and the Russian speakers in southeastern and northern Ukraine.<sup>72</sup>

According to Byron MacWilliams, there is a lack of support for Ukrainian, and unless media and publishing do not embrace the language, the nation will continue to use two languages.<sup>73</sup> In the summer of 2003, I did not watch a single television station during my stay in Bohodukhiv that was not a Ukrainian language station. This was in stark contrast with my 1992 visit when only one station we received at home was a Ukrainian station. In fact, I learned much of my Russian by watching traditional American cartoons like "Chip & Dale" in Russian. By 2003, Ukrainian language newspapers dominated as well. It would appear that there is definitely support for reinstating Ukrainian as the official language. While this may be true, people will continue to speak the language in which they feel most comfortable. It is children who will be confused by the indecision. Vasil Kremen, Ukraine's minister of education and science, says "[a]bsolutely everyone must know Ukrainian, but I put English in the first place: It is the language of the Internet of international relationships."<sup>74</sup> Teachers of English in Bohodukhiv confirm that students' interest in learning English has been revived. Students are beginning to apply themselves more diligently because they understand that knowing English will be a key to their future. It is one piece of the bridge they are building.

Andrey Lubensky, journalist, reporting for PRAVDA,<sup>75</sup> suggests that the doctrine for education in Ukraine is unrealistic at best and, at worst, a fantasy. The budget sets aside 6 billion hryvnas for education (approximately \$1 billion). Given that the funding is supposed to be not less than ten percent of the GNP, this should be much higher. Virtually everyone agrees that this degree of funding cannot keep the prestige of Ukrainian teachers at a proper level. Teachers' wages were lower than the living wage, and industrial workers earned twice as much as teachers. The prediction is that the number of teachers will fall because there is no

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72. Sergei Kiselyov. *Ukraine not so Western After All*. BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS. Available at <http://www.thebulletin.org/issues/1994/jf94/jf94Ukraine.html> (last visited June 3, 2004).

73. Byron MacWilliams & Katherine S. Mangan. *Conflicts Over Language Impede Ukraine's Higher-Education System*. CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, February 2, 2001.

74. *Id.*

75. Russian language newspaper located in the Russian Republic. The Russian word Pravda translates to truth.

attraction to a profession that does not pay a living wage. American teachers have already dealt with this issue. When I began teaching in 1969, beginning salaries averaged around \$5,000 a year, much lower than other professionals' entry-level salaries. Fortunately, that has changed significantly in this country, but only because a stable economy made it possible to negotiate for higher starting salaries. Because the government funding support for education in Ukraine is not in place, this is not likely to happen there for many years.

Another major issue for Ukrainian education is the computerization of schools. For years, children and teachers in American schools have taken it for granted that there would be computer and Internet availability at school either in individual classrooms or in computer laboratories or media centers. When I was in Bohodukhiv in 1992, only one school had a computer lab where students were learning the basics of programming. I did not meet anyone who had a personal PC. Internet connections were virtually unheard of. By the time I returned in 2003, many more families had computers (including my own host family because I had purchased it for them so that their boys could be computer literate). Most of the e-mail contact between Boyertown and Bohodukhiv was with two people, one a local politician and the other a teacher in Kharkiv. This would seem to affirm the contention of Lubensky that a very small percentage of students and teachers have access to computers either at school or at home and even fewer have Internet access. He reports that the Center for economic and political research has found that only 22.4% of Ukrainian pupils have access to a PC and only 12.2% have that access at home. According to the Center's statistics, the numbers for teachers (attributed to poverty and the natural conservatism of teachers) is even lower.<sup>76</sup> Minister of Education, Vasily Kremen does not see the picture as this bleak. He acknowledges that although the problems of education are very important, they cannot all be solved immediately. The work must begin to solve the problems. The doctrine calls for an increase of 80-90% in teachers' wages and while the computerization of schools might not happen right away, work has begun.

In 2002 there were twenty-two political parties<sup>77</sup> represented in the Verkhovna Rada.<sup>78</sup> Nearly all had some stance on education. Certainly most believed that education needed to be a focus of state policy but they

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76. Andrey Lubensky, *Ukraine Education Development Doctrine is a Fantasy*. June 15, 2002, PRAVDA. (Moscow), available at <http://english.pravda.ru/cis/2002/06/15/30404.html> (last visited November 16, 2003).

77. After the most recent elections, Our Ukraine had earned 24% of the vote, CPU 20%, United Ukraine 12%, United Social Democratic Party 6%, SPU 7%, Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc 7%, other parties 24%.

78. See note 29, *supra*.

disagreed on what direction the focus should take. Virtually every group, but most notably the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists<sup>79</sup> and People's Rukh<sup>80</sup> of Ukraine and Ukrainian People's Party Sobor,<sup>81</sup> called for priority in funding of education. One party, "Reforms and Order"<sup>82</sup> specifically calls for special budget allowances for schools where there are significant numbers of students with special needs. Virtually every political party wants education to be free and available and accessible to all without discrimination. The Republican Christian Party<sup>83</sup> clearly sets out the need for standards in education. Other groups address the need for newer technology and newer pedagogical practice.<sup>84</sup>

At this point, the Law on Education of 1996<sup>85</sup> determines "provision of the basic general secondary education" and the Law on General Secondary Education of 1998<sup>86</sup> in Article 9 gives the following definition: "Basic (secondary) school is a comprehensive school of the second level with education of a prevailing applied direction."<sup>87</sup> With this law the duration of schooling at the basic school will be five years with 190 school days a year. Basic school is a second level of school and is actually a final basic level of formal basic education. It is actually what most countries identify as secondary school. It is compulsory and free. The total duration of formal basic education is eight years if a pupil completed the course of the three-year elementary school, or nine years in the case of a four-year elementary school. The first level of schooling is preschool. More than half of children who enter the first class of a general education school have been brought up at state and departmental preschool establishments (nursery schools). Adding days onto the school

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79. People's Choice party held 15 seats in Verkhovna Rada. People's Choice was a splinter faction from United Ukraine that broke off after the election.

80. Rukh (pyk) literally translates from the Russian as hand or arm. Figuratively then, the connection is that this is the party that is the arm of the people.

81. It is quite difficult to delineate all the parties represented and their stance on education. The parties named are the major ones representing the people of Ukraine at [http://www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/publications/publicat\\_1112\\_eng.shtml](http://www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/publications/publicat_1112_eng.shtml).

82. *Id.*

83. *Id.*

84. Igor Zhadov, Sergiy Shanghin, *The Problems of Education in the Programmes of the Parties Represented in Parliament*. National Security and Defence, No. 4 (28), April 2002. Available at [http://www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/publications/publicat\\_1112\\_eng.shtml](http://www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/publications/publicat_1112_eng.shtml) (last visited November 24, 2003).

85. Law no. 100/96 VR dated 23 March 1996, VVR, 1996, No. 21, page 84). This is listed in the most recent copy of Law of Ukraine "On Education" available through Internet resources.

86. Law no. 178-XIV (178-14) dated 14 October 1998, VVR, 1998, No. 48, page 294. The 1998 amendment to the Law of Ukraine "On Education" amends articles with regard to physical education and sports activities. Available at [http://www.rs9.loc.gov:7778/pls/glnp/Display\\_abstract1?cookie=0&Abstract\\_id=79225](http://www.rs9.loc.gov:7778/pls/glnp/Display_abstract1?cookie=0&Abstract_id=79225) (last visited February 20, 2004).

87. [http://www.ednu.kiev.ua/edu\\_se\\_bas.htm](http://www.ednu.kiev.ua/edu_se_bas.htm) (last visited June 3, 2004).

year and a year onto the total is one piece of improving opportunities for Ukrainian students to be adequately prepared for the future.

## V. The Tale of Three Cities

### A. *Initial exchange, 1992*

Law and doctrine are conceptually fine, but it is the real people of Bohodukhiv who are struggling with the educational issues of Ukraine. They are quite removed from the political arena where the decisions are made, but they do understand the importance of their schools and teachers. When I arrived in Bohodukhiv from Boyertown in August of 1992, people were somewhat fearful of having this unknown American teacher living among them. Old prejudices and biases persisted. There was understandable curiosity about what the three months would bring. No one was overtly unfriendly, but there was a definite wariness on the part of some of the townspeople.

People, especially the teachers I met, were earning less than a living wage and were grappling with the changes in the way they received goods and services. Frequently the teachers were not paid at all for weeks or even months, yet they managed to pay each of the American teachers a small stipend.<sup>88</sup> The teachers wondered, in private conversations, what American teachers would do if they did not receive their pay on time.<sup>89</sup> Teachers and students had little in the way of school supplies, and their buildings were cold as the summer gave way to fall and winter. In spite of all that, the teachers were emphatic in their belief that the children they were teaching that year were the future, that they would be the beneficiaries of the new independent nation's changing policies. They went to work every day to do what they loved: to teach, to make a difference in the lives of children, to build the bridge to the future.

On the first day of school it was my privilege to share in the traditions as a new group of first graders began their educational journey. Most of them had never heard English spoken and those who had, certainly had not heard it spoken with an American accent. All their teachers of English and their students spoke the British variant.

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88. As I recall being given my stipend in coupons and taking it home, there was much discussion of how worthless the paper was. After considering the dire economic conditions of the family with whom I live, I turned my stipend over to them.

89. Teachers in Bohodukhiv schools had no concept of strikes and how to organize themselves. They did not fully understand the concept of bargaining for a contract and then expecting adherence to that contract. They were accustomed to the State providing their salaries on schedule. Labor organizations now negotiate for teachers to protect their interests.

Everything about the three Americans, except that we were teachers, was strange to these children, yet they welcomed us, gave us tokens of their esteem and introduced us to their culture and their educational traditions.

The school system was structured differently from most American schools and Boyertown in particular. Although in appearance they looked much like American high schools, the three Bohodukhiv school buildings housed all grades from first through eleventh. If children attended preschool, it was at one of the kindergartens in town which were equally daycare facilities and educational institutions with some of them even providing emergency overnight care for preschool-age children. It was not uncommon to see brothers and sisters of widely disparate ages walking to school together and spending break time together as well. Both students and teachers walked to school. Very few faculty members drove automobiles to school. The concept of school buses<sup>90</sup> to transport children was unheard of. Imagine my amazement when the bell rang and students cleaned the chalkboards and mopped down the floors. Sanitary facilities were less than ideal, and the boys' and girls' lavatories of American schools were not in evidence. In fact it was common for students to use outdoor facilities. Of course this was not unusual for them because many did not have indoor facilities at home.

Most children starting school that year were six or seven years old. In Bohodukhiv there were three schools, appropriately named School #1, School #2, and School #3. My particular affinity was for School #1 even though it was obvious that most of the town thought that the elite students attended either School #2 or School #3. Perhaps I felt this affinity because both my dear friend, Tamara, and my hostess, Ludmila, teach there. Perhaps it was because it was the first school we visited and the welcome was so traditional and warm. Perhaps it was because the director invited me to teach his teachers how American teachers teach. Maybe some things just cannot be explained. The other Boyertown teachers connected as strongly to each of the other schools!

School #2 was still under the directorship of an admitted member of the Communist party, and the rigidity in his school was interesting by contrast with the directorial styles of the other directors (principals). In that school, every classroom still displayed Lenin's picture at the front of the room and even several years later when I returned, many of them were still in evidence although in the other schools they had disappeared.

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90. By contrast, in the sister city of Boyertown, 90% of the students ride district provided bus transportation to school. Many of the teachers and students in Bohodukhiv walk farther than children in Boyertown are bused and very few faculty at any of the Boyertown schools walk to school.

While faculty at schools #1 and #3 seemed to be predominantly female, at School #2 there was a much higher incidence of male faculty.

Attendance at a particular school was determined by residence much like the elementary schools of an earlier age in the U.S. where children attended neighborhood schools. I also learned that there were numerous "village" schools under the jurisdiction of the Bohodukhiv regional government and that those schools ranged in size from very small with only a few students at each grade level to schools nearly as large as those in the city itself. We had the opportunity to visit most of these "village" schools and found the students and teachers warm and welcoming, even when the temperatures dropped below freezing and it was snowing INSIDE the building because no one had responsibility for stoking the furnace. Although Bohodukhiv is categorized as a city, it should be noted that its population was more like that of a small town in the U.S. It took us a great deal of time on very bad roads to get to some of the village schools and it was easy to see why the villages chose to maintain their own schools rather than send students into Bohodukhiv. Typically at the front of each classroom was a picture of Lenin, a mark that Marxist-Leninist philosophy<sup>91</sup> was still present. Soviet pedagogue. Anton S. Makarenko's approach to discipline was part of the educational philosophy as well.<sup>92</sup> The statue of Lenin in the town square was prominent.

In the schools of Bohodukhiv, children would complete their primary education (three or four years) and their basic general education. Following completion of their years there, students would go on to vocational education or other forms of higher education. It was very common for young men to enter the army at an age as young as 16 and for students to be going off to universities in Kharkiv and Kyiv at that age as well. It is less common now for students to complete their basic general education at 16 because of added years of required schooling.

The Sister Cities relationship between Boyertown, Pennsylvania and Bohodukhiv, Ukraine had worked hard to create the opportunity for teachers to travel to Ukraine to continue the exchange begun the preceding year. We knew we would find things very different from

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91. The Marxist-Leninist philosophy had the aim of educating youth and shaping their character. The desire was to impress upon young people ideals of "good and bad, honesty, modesty, kindness, friendship, self-discipline, love of studies and conscientiousness and 'correct social behavior.'" The aim was to provide a dedicated and skilled workforce. *Pedagogy and Planning: Library of Congress Country Studies*, available at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?fd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID\\_su0170](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?fd/cstdy:@field(DOCID_su0170) (last visited June 3, 2004).

92. Makarenko was Lenin's officer of education. His discipline theories were based on the use of oral reprimands by teachers, peer disapproval, demerits, parent conferences, and, as a last resort, expulsion from school. Physical punishment was forbidden. *Id.*



home, and we were not disappointed. The students of Bohodukhiv and their teachers had never experienced a teaching style quite like mine. None of their teachers sat on the floor and invited their students to join them. The students found it difficult to respond to my questions without the formal raising of hands and rising to respond. Things were further complicated by the fact that my Russian was not adequate<sup>93</sup> for me to conduct my classes in their language and I was compelled to teach through a translator. I believe that, although the translators were the teachers of English who had visited Boyertown the previous year and had seen me teach, they could not quite bring themselves to get into the same style as I was. Traditional pedagogy of lecture and recitation was the norm, and students frequently looked to their teachers for permission to join me in my radical teaching style. I saw some teachers who were harsh disciplinarians and I never heard a student talk back to a teacher. I saw relatively few students who did not have homework completed even when hours of work had been assigned.

Students stood when a teacher entered the room and waited for permission to be seated. They sat with their arms folded on their desks, ready to work, raised their hands to be acknowledged and stood to recite when called upon. When another teacher entered the room to have a conversation with a teacher, the students were immediately silent and stood up, out of respect for the teacher. It was a far cry from what I lived with in my high school classrooms in Boyertown. At first it seemed like something to be desired, but later it seemed that the students weren't having any fun, and I could not really tell what they were learning. When I asked students to draw pictures and sing with me and write poetry to go with their drawings, they seemed stunned. To sit in a circle or on the floor for a discussion was unheard of. I know they could recite volumes of poetry and literature because we were treated to outstanding displays of Ukrainian culture and literature presented by the students from all grade levels. The teachers were obviously knowledgeable and their expectations of their students were high.

My colleagues and I visited kindergartens (preschools) and nearly every class at every grade level at each of the schools. The picture of education in Bohodukhiv mirrored that of all other schools in Ukraine of the time. Children began their formal education at about the age of seven in the first grade and ended with the eleventh grade. It was very clear that the students and people of the town held teachers in high regard, and students demonstrated respect towards their teachers. Teachers

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93. When I arrived in Bohodukhiv, I could say about five rudimentary phrases in Russian. I learned rapidly because no one in my host family spoke English with any greater facility than my own in Russian.

decorated their own classrooms and, to a much larger degree than even many U.S. elementary teachers, provided school supplies. If teachers wanted curtains, or bookshelves or paint on their walls, they provided them. If they wanted decorations to enhance their teaching, they provided them. The students wore uniforms. In the short span of three months, I would come to know hundreds of students and many, many teachers in the major schools of the town and the small village schools of the surrounding region. I would learn to love the people for their generosity and kindness and sincere desire to change perceptions of the republics of the former Soviet Union as enemies of America with a hatred for the American people. I would come to understand that the generation of Ukrainians who had lived through WWII and the Cold War were understandably reticent to become involved with Americans, but that reticence could be overcome with patience and goodness. People are basically the same in their hearts.

We returned home in November of 1992 with a deep appreciation for the immense challenges facing Ukrainian educators. Progress was being made on the bridge between Boyertown and Bohodukhiv because of our time spent there. In 1993, when students from Bohodukhiv visited Boyertown, glimmers of the strengthening of the partnership could be seen. In 1994, I returned to Ukraine with eight students from Boyertown to continue the exchange tradition. I returned again in 1996 for a personal visit. There was no problem for an American to obtain a visa to visit Ukraine, although it was becoming more and more difficult for Ukrainians to receive visas to visit the United States even for sanctioned exchanges. In 1999, four students, two from Bohodukhiv and two from Boyertown participated in the World Scholar-Athlete Games<sup>94</sup> in Rhode Island. This was another way the education links were forged.

#### *B. Subsequent visits—1994-2001*

In my 1994 and 1996 visits to Ukraine and to Bohodukhiv in particular, it was difficult to see significant change. Small things were different, but in general, the town looked about the same. Little building or renovation had occurred. There were no more cars on the roads because gasoline was still scarce. By 1996, there were far fewer pictures of Lenin at the fronts of classrooms. Teachers had frequently replaced them with pictures of Taras Shevchenko, national poet of Ukraine. The

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94. World Scholar-Athlete Games are organized by the Institute for International Sport based in Newport, Rhode Island and are held in the style of the Olympics every four years. The point is to bring together youth from around the world to participate in athletic and arts programs and to participate in seminars that will teach these young people about leadership for the new millennium through friendship.

statue of Lenin in the town square was showing signs of decay and people no longer routinely placed flowers at its base. I was told the statue would remain as a reminder of the way things once were. There was no enlightenment as to whether the person who said that meant it in a negative or positive way. By my third visit, my Russian language skills had improved to the point where I could actually carry on conversations, and more and more people recognized me each time I returned. The bad thing was that now that it was mandated that all teaching would be done in Ukrainian, I could not follow what went on in classes nearly as well. There were more goods in the stores, but people still had no significantly better opportunity to purchase those items.

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia retained the ruble and Ukraine was left to develop its own currency. In my earliest visit in 1992 the people were paid in *kypona* (coupons) that they laughingly called "just paper." The worth of coupons fluctuated from day to day, and by the time teachers were paid, in cash, the pile of coupons necessary to make up even their miniscule salaries, was laughably huge. Although *hryvna* were designed and set to be printed in Canada in 1992, the *hryvna* did not actually become the official currency until 1996 when the National Bank of Ukraine introduced them. As of September 15, 1997, the *hryvna* was the only legal tender in Ukraine. At that time the exchange rate was fixed at 100,000 coupons to 1 *hryvna*.<sup>95</sup> Finally the nation was beginning to see some stability in currency and by my 2003 visit, things looked significantly better on that front.

The children were growing up. Teachers were still providing their own classroom decorations and students were still cleaning the boards and hallways and classrooms between classes. Between 1996 and 2003 a great deal happened, including the world's fear of terrorism. U.S. officials were becoming increasingly wary of foreign visitors. In a world filled with turmoil and upheaval, it continued to be clear that education will continue to play a key role in promoting the well being of the world's people as well as the peaceful coexistence so necessary in today's explosive world. It became more and more difficult to arrange exchanges. The United States did not easily grant visas even though Sister Cities International officially supported the exchanges and Boyertown and Bohodukhiv had a history of completing exchanges without incident.

In September 2000, I left Boyertown to accept a position in the

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95. *Hryvnia-The New Official Currency of Ukraine*. There are multiple spellings for the word: *hryvnia*, *hryvna*, *grivna*. I have chosen to use *hryvna* throughout this commentary. Available at <http://www.uazone.net/Hryvnia/index.html> (last visited June 3, 2004).

College of Education at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. It was a bit eerie to find myself inside Hollybush, site of the 1967 summit, for the new faculty reception that fall. Remarkably, the connection had come full circle. By 2000, I had a history with the people of Ukraine, formerly Soviet citizens. I could deeply appreciate the memorabilia displayed at Hollybush because it was more personal to me than to other faculty members at the reception. It struck home that I had more than one connection through education to the people of the world. Unfortunately, my choice to move to Glassboro and Rowan meant that I no longer had any official involvement in further exchanges even though I remained in contact with my friends in Bohodukhiv and kept close tabs on what was happening with Boyertown Sister Cities. An exchange between the Presidents of the two sister city organizations did happen, but visas were becoming more and more difficult to get. There was much anxiety until we heard that the visas had been granted. The exchange of Presidents in 2000 and 2001 brought me great joy because Ludmila Maslak, the Bohodukhiv President, had been my hostess in 1992.

The Boyertown committee was looking forward to bringing two teachers from Bohodukhiv in 2002 to continue the tradition of teacher exchange. These two teachers were part of the next generation of teachers. One, Viktoria Kharchenko, had been a student teacher ten years earlier during our visit, and the other, Olena Nakonechna was in her first or second year of teaching. That second round of a teacher exchange did not happen. The teachers chosen for the honor were denied visas. Imagine the devastation of these teachers when they went to Kyiv to pick up their visas, airline tickets and luggage for a three month stay in hand, only to be told that their visas had been denied on the grounds that they were a flight risk once in the U.S.<sup>96</sup>

Even though there had been a series of successful exchanges with all participants returning to Ukraine, the teachers were deemed to have insufficient evidence to persuade the American Embassy that they would return to their jobs, homes, and families. There is no provision in the visa application process<sup>97</sup> for American citizens to guarantee the return

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96. Over time, since the influx of immigrants to the U.S., there have been numerous reasons for denial of visas to enter the country. Probably the most common reason generations ago was that there was some contagious medical condition that authorities would spread in the U.S. Now there seems to be the belief that many visitors from underprivileged and underdeveloped countries will become a flight risk once in the U.S. and simply disappear. There are also concerns about international terrorism that cause visa denial.

97. Applicants for a visa to enter the U.S. must complete all necessary application forms and passport checks, submit photographs and pay fees. They must demonstrate intent to return home rather than stay permanently in the U.S. They must demonstrate

of foreign nationals to their own country. No amount of communication, by telephone or in writing, could persuade the embassy personnel of the importance of this exchange. There was simply nothing to be done except to try again the next year. It should be noted that even though the teachers' visas were denied, the \$100 (not hryvna, dollars) fee for each teacher's application was not refunded. I was embarrassed by my nation's refusal to believe that these Ukrainian teachers would fulfill their responsibility as exchange teachers and return to continue the goal of promoting peace and friendship through education. I could not explain the reasoning and I cried. Dreams were crushed. Students who had begun to believe there might be a way for them to visit America themselves one day if they worked hard on their English put their hopes away along with the dreams of their teachers.

*C. Most recent visit—2003*

I returned in June of 2003 for the graduation of the class that had started first grade at School #1 when I was there in 1992. Invited to speak at their graduation, I worked tirelessly on what I wanted to say, and was moderately embarrassed that I had to speak Russian rather than Ukrainian.<sup>98</sup> My knees were shaking as I stood at the microphone wondering if these bright young adults could possibly be the same children with whom I had shared their First Bell.<sup>99</sup> Gone were the uniforms and the huge bows in the curls of the girls. It took me only a minute to recognize the smiles and the joy in their faces; indeed these were the same young people. That evening they sat there in formal attire rather than the uniforms they had worn as first year students, but the ceremony took place in exactly the same schoolyard where their First Bell had occurred in 1992. I received roses from some of the students and it struck me that indeed I had helped to build a bridge between two

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"strong ties" to their homeland. While documentation for this differs, family, jobs, home ownership are some of the ways applicants can do this. The law places burden of proof on the applicant. While American citizens may provide letters of invitation or support, an American sponsor's assurance is not sufficient. Applicants must qualify based on their own circumstances. Available at <http://travel.state.gov/visadenials.html> (last visited February 21, 2004).

98. I told them of my joy at sharing their first and last days of school. I challenged them to work hard to make the world a better place for everyone. I reminded them that they are our future. I encouraged them to continue their education, whether formally in school or in other ways so that they continue to construct the bridge of peace and friendship.

99. First Bell is a Ukrainian tradition where one boy and one girl are chosen from among the first graders. These two representatives are carried around the schoolyard on the shoulders of two of the senior boys. As they move around the schoolyard, they ring a traditional old-fashioned handheld school bell.

worlds, a bridge built on the foundation of education.

During this visit, it was my honor to work with Viktoria and Olena to prepare them to go for their second visa interviews in the hope that the aborted teacher exchange could occur in 2003. This time I wrote letters of support to go with their official invitations from Boyertown. Together we assembled those documents that would display their commitment to the ideals of the Sister Cities organization as well as documents that would be sufficient evidence of their "strong ties"<sup>100</sup> with Ukraine. With much apprehension, they went to Kyiv for their visa interviews. A second denial was too horrific to contemplate, but their fear of exactly that eventuality was deep-seated. They were well prepared. In this second attempt, both were able to show sufficient documentation that not only would they be participating in an official exchange, but also their strong ties to their homeland would bring them back to share what they learned with their students and colleagues. When their visas were granted, they called from Kyiv and we shared tears, this time tears of joy. The plans moved forward for their visit to Boyertown in fall, 2003, and the next piece was added to the growing bridge of opportunity.

I did see changes in 2003 when I returned to Ukraine. On the road from Kyiv<sup>101</sup> where there had been little but open space several years earlier, there were cafes, restaurants, and gasoline stations. In Bohodukhiv, the stores are open and some even accept credit cards. There are multiple banks functioning in the city, and my husband was even able to do a cash advance with his credit card. Of course, he received hryvna because there were not enough dollars at the bank, but that is progress too.

Without the commitment of the students to continuing their educations and making the world a better place, we will fall behind. The progress that has been made will be lost. I hope that some of Bohodukhiv's young people will decide to become teachers even though there are more glamorous careers with more lucrative salaries. School #1 still looked pretty much the same. At graduation, we sat on the same chairs that had graced the classrooms in 1992. The day after graduation, School #1 was getting a new coat of interior paint, but I am relatively certain that the same desks were in the classrooms. The many years of feet treading the staircases and halls had left impressions and it was a good feeling to know that my footsteps were a part of the school's history.

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100. As has been noted, "strong ties" is one of the things applicants must show to receive a visa. Strong ties has different meanings to different Embassy personnel, so it is really a toss of the dice whether the evidence presented will be sufficient. There is no real way to determine how much evidence is enough evidence.

101. Kyiv is about a seven-hour drive from Bohodukhiv.

Just two months after my return to Glassboro from Ukraine, it was my pleasure to host Viktoria and Olena for two days at Rowan University and to show them Hollybush. They too felt the connection, although one had not yet been born when the summit occurred and the other was a toddler. It seemed that fate had a hand in all the connected strands of our involvement with each other. I watched these teachers as they participated in the activities of my pedagogy classes; I could not help but feel a sense of pride that I might have a small influence in the methodology they would later use in their own classrooms. As a new generation of teachers, they are working hard to integrate progressive teaching methodology into their classes. I took them to teacher supply stores and filled their suitcases with materials to enhance their teaching. I was determined that they would be the best equipped teachers of English in the town.

After they had an opportunity to visit public schools at all levels in Boyertown and in the Glassboro area, I interviewed the two teachers about the progress of education in their country and city. When asked about government support of education, Vita (Viktoria) and Lena (Olena)<sup>102</sup> concurred that the government is obligated to support education, however the support is connected to the budgetary needs of the nation, and occasionally local municipalities are expected to carry a larger financial burden than seems proportionally fair. In many towns this is extremely difficult because people are either unemployed, on fixed pensions, or hold low-paying jobs. Obviously there are towns in the U.S. with similar problems, but the severity of the problem in Ukraine, and particularly in Bohodukhiv, is depressing. The revenue in these towns is small. Government verbally supports education and pays lip service to the need for and importance of education. The local government is the governing body for education and this administration governs the local schools and makes decisions about how money will be spent.

The first years of independence were definitely the worst because there were few new textbooks and the books that schools had espoused the Communist philosophy. Often teachers were not paid on time or for long periods of time. I reminded them of the questions teachers asked of us in 1992 about what American teachers would do if they had not been paid in several months. We, I said, would go on strike, refuse to continue working. Then, Bohodukhiv teachers could not conceive of such a thing. They went to work every day without knowing whether they would be paid or not. By 2003 even Ukrainian teachers had begun to talk about striking for back pay and higher salaries in accordance with

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102. Interview with Viktoria Kharchenko and Olena Nakonechna, Bohodukhiv teachers of English, in Glassboro, New Jersey, September 25, 2003.

what President Kuchma had been saying was essential to the growth of education in Ukraine.

Students, under the 1996<sup>103</sup> law, are now attending school for twelve years instead of eleven and this includes preschool, primary and general secondary education. Compulsory general secondary education is new. Following these twelve years, students will, as before, make a choice of either entering institutions of higher education or going to work. The former grading system has been replaced with a twelve point system with twelve being the highest attainable score.<sup>104</sup> This appears to be more in line with other European countries. With the coming of the additional year of school, new courses and extensions of other courses will be necessary. There appears to be a renewed interest in the study of foreign languages. Foreign language study begins now at the second grade. Computer studies, economics, philosophy and world cultures will be expanded.

Most of the young people of Bohodukhiv are eager to get a higher education and become real professionals and to contribute to the development of the country. It appears that students, especially senior students, are beginning to work harder at the subjects they will need to do well on in their higher education entrance exams. Perhaps these students will be successful enough to receive government subsidy for their studies, essentially scholarships based on academic achievement.

As was obvious in 1992, students respect the teaching profession and their teachers. There seems to be tacit agreement with what the 1966 international Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers<sup>105</sup> said:

Teaching should be regarded as a profession; it is a form of public service that requires teachers of expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous study; it calls also for a sense of personal and corporate responsibility for the education and welfare of the pupils in their charge.<sup>106</sup>

In spite of a level of respect, teachers' salaries do not keep pace with the

103. 1996 Law on Education, *supra* note 85.

104. System of the Education of Ukraine, available at [http://education.gov.ua/pls/edu/docs/common/education\\_eng.html](http://education.gov.ua/pls/edu/docs/common/education_eng.html) (last visited November 16, 2003).

105. *Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*. The recommendation was adopted on October 5, 1966 and was a joint recommendation by ILO and UNESCO. The two organizations studied the teaching profession for a number of years and finally proposed the recommendation at a conference held in Paris. It has remained unamended. "[It] is still considered to be a valid instrument to promote good teaching practices." Available at [http://portal.unesco.org/education/ev.php?URL\\_ID=5366&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=2...](http://portal.unesco.org/education/ev.php?URL_ID=5366&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=2...) (last visited February 21, 2004).

106. *Joint Message on the Occasion of World Teachers' Day* (on file with the author). [hereinafter *Joint Message*]



cost of living. It is always interesting when people think that respect is more important than a living wage. "It is very difficult," say Vita and Lena, "for a family to survive if the only source of income is a teacher's salary."<sup>107</sup> The average teacher salary is about 250 hryvna each month, and this is relatively consistent throughout Ukraine. At the current rate of exchange,<sup>108</sup> that would be about \$50 per month. Teachers are paid once or twice a month and now salaries are direct deposited and teachers may use bankcards to access their funds. Normally teachers teach five to seven classes per day and frequently take work home with them the same as their American counterparts.

Teachers teach for three years at a beginning rank and then are awarded the next rank. If they wish to move to the next rank (1), they must teach for an additional five years. This is similar to most states in the U.S. where teachers have professional development obligations. At the highest level will be a rank of teacher-methodologist. In order to attain this rank, teachers will attend courses for three or four weeks and take a test. They are also expected to make reports, give seminars on methods of teaching, conduct research, and publish articles.<sup>109</sup> This is more reminiscent of requirements in higher education in the U.S. than is typical of public school teachers. In the U.S., completion of a higher degree will most often result in a higher salary. In Ukraine, changing levels of teaching is a matter of prestige. The teachers are not earning a degree per se, but they are showing that they have demonstrably stronger teaching skills and success with students. The teachers demonstrate their teaching expertise to inspectors from Kharkiv. Every year Ukrainian teachers have the opportunity to participate in different kinds of seminars just as their American counterparts participate in school district sponsored professional development activities. The teachers of Bohodukhiv are accepting their personal responsibility to provide a quality education for their students. Vita has attained the rank of head teacher and will next attempt to earn her teacher-methodologist rank. She has already presented at teaching conferences and published a paper about the teaching of English as a foreign language. As these teachers continue to touch lives, they add to the stability of the bridge under construction.

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107. Interview with Viktoriya Kharchenko and Olena Nakonechna, *supra* note 102.

108. On February 25, 2004, one U.S. dollar = 5.400 Hryvna. This rate has remained relatively stable since September 2003 when it was one U.S. dollar = 5.33 Hryvna, available at <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic> (last visited June 3, 2004).

109. E-mail communication with Viktoriya Kharchenko, Bohodukhiv English teacher, May 27, 2004.

## V. Conclusion

The Joint Message on the Occasion of World Teachers' Day<sup>110</sup> by Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, Juan Somavia, Director-General of ILO<sup>111</sup>, Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of UNDP<sup>112</sup> and Carol Bellamy, Executive-Director of UNICEF<sup>113</sup> asked "parents and all citizens to think of the difference a good teacher, a memorable teacher, ha[s] made in your life. Where would you be now if that teacher hadn't crossed your path, if demotivated, that teacher had already left the profession."<sup>114</sup> They go on to say that we are facing a teacher shortage crisis. More and more teachers are leaving the profession because of "budget cuts, chaotic working conditions, imminent retirement for ageing staff, by stress and burnout, and in many communities by a massive death-toll of teachers due to HIV/AIDS."<sup>115</sup> Without good teachers, no country will continue to move forward. Ukraine is no exception. There are many good teachers who are struggling every day to overcome the political problems of their country as it begins its second decade as an independent nation. Using the words of the Joint Message, "We salute your courage, commitment and determination. Be assured that there is no substitute for your profession, which deserves the respect and support of everyone. Let there be no mistake: our future depends on it."<sup>116</sup> All teachers deserve this, but these young teachers of Bohodukhiv have clearly accepted their responsibility to provide a quality education for the children in their care. They go to work each day committed to their students and determined to help give them a better future. They are like thousands of teachers in the U.S. and around the world who have the courage to teach. It is not about a law or declaration or convention or treaty that mandates a child's right to an education. It is about their belief that education will change the world and that their students can be the catalyst for that change.

There are obstacles to completing any bridge to the future that is built by education especially in an emerging democracy. It is difficult to continue to think of Ukraine as an emerging democracy, but it is. There

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110. World Teachers' Day, also known as International Teachers' Day, is celebrated every year on October 5. It was created by Federico Mayor, then Director-General of UNESCO, at the International Conference on Education in Geneva in 1993. It has been customary for the four officers of UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, and UNICEF to put out a joint statement connected with the state of education and the importance of teachers. More than 100 countries currently recognize World Teachers' Day.

111. ILO=International Labor Organization.

112. UNDP=United Nations Development Program.

113. UNICEF=United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

114. *Joint Message*, *supra* note 106.

115. *Id.*

116. *Id.*

have been great strides forward in the last twelve years in Bohodukhiv. The picture is not yet complete. There are still things to accomplish and education is the key to the future. It is UNESCO's mission to "promote education" and that is "central to all its tasks and for its international standing."<sup>117</sup> To provide quality education for all will be a paramount challenge for all countries. The right to education is a human right, and unless it can be secured, all other goals are bound to suffer.

The right to education must be transformed from ideal to reality as today, even after decades of effort, over 100 million children still do not attend school and 150 million drop out without learning to read, write and use numbers. Gender inequalities constrain access and achievement. The illiteracy of 900 million adults limits their individual growth and the social development of their communities. While in relative terms, progress has been registered, in absolute terms the numbers have grown dramatically on a global scale and for many regions. Over the next half century, the world's population will increase by half—to more than 9 billion people. Half of them will be young children needing an increasingly demanding education. This in itself will be a staggering task as never before in human history.<sup>118</sup>

In the United States currently there is a great deal of conversation about the federally mandated No Child Left Behind<sup>119</sup> initiative. The phrase itself is a pointed reminder of national and international documents that identify education as both a right of citizens and a responsibility of governments to provide. No teacher goes to work every day with the goal of leaving children behind, yet in many developing nations, lack of organization and financial resources just might be the cause of children falling behind in the journey to achieving their goals and dreams. Ukrainian children in towns like Bohodukhiv may be left behind if additional resources for education cannot be found. These children know the value of an education. More and more of them are daring to believe they will have a chance at a higher education as their parents and grandparents had guaranteed by the State. In Bohodukhiv, a

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117. UNESCO's Constitution, *supra* note 31.

118. Contributing to peace and human development in an era of globalization through education, the sciences, culture and communication. UNESCO, 31 C/4 2002.

119. Public Law 107—January 8, 2002 115 STAT.1425 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. An Act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. This title may be cited as the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001." (NCLB). The act itself reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.). NCLB has four major ideals: stronger accountability for results; more freedom for States and Communities; encouraging proven educational methods; more choices for parents. Available at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb> (last visited February 15, 2004).

revived interest in the study of foreign languages, especially English may give some an edge. If these young people can pass their entrance exams at a high enough level, they will receive financial support to complete their education. If not, struggling families will find any way they can to help their children achieve their dreams. Like the father who bartered his work ethic and mechanical skills to earn the money to send his older son to university, they will find a way to provide a better future for their children. Times are even more difficult for the younger son, but he has a dream and he is willing to work to attain it.

The tale of three cities continues. The foundation pilings for the bridge were sunk years ago and the magnitude of the bridge to be built was not obvious. It is a bridge that must span cultures, ideologies, languages, hardships, skepticism and fear. Its foundation is education for the children of the present and the future. Boyertown, Bohodukhiv, and Glassboro will always be part of that foundation. From that first teacher exchange was born the determination to change the world one student and one teacher at a time. From the second exchange was born the conviction that it is working. No one yet knows what will be born from the next exchange, but we do know that the teachers of three cities understand that all citizens have a right to an education, that it is partially our responsibility to provide that education even in the face of daunting odds, and that the bridge of opportunity must be finished so that the journey may continue.

